DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 323 490 CS 010 201

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TITLE Whole Language for High-Risk Students. A Descriptive Study.
PUB DATE Aug 89
NOTE 94p.; M.A. Thesis, University of Northern Iowa.
PUB TYPE Dissertations/Theses - Master Theses (042)

EDRS PRICE MF01/PC04 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS Classroom Research; Grade 7; *High Risk Students; Junior High Schools; *Language Arts; Reading Instruction; Reading Research; Reading Writing Relationship; Student Attitudes; *Theory Practice Relationship; *Whole Language Approach
IDENTIFIERS Iowa Tests of Basic Skills

ABSTRACT

A study was conducted to determine the appropriateness of a particular whole language program, entitled "Project Victory," designed specifically for a group of high-risk, seventh-grade students in a predominately urban intermediate public school. Subjects were 20 students identified as high-risk by their school district on the basis of the Iowa Tests of Basic Skills performance scores. Project Victory consisted of a 3-hour morning block of language instruction based on the philosophical theory of whole language. The program integrated the language processes of reading, writing, speaking, listening, and thinking and focused on functional, relevant literature such as magazines, newspapers, and trade books. Curriculum and instruction were based on the specific language needs of the student. Both formal and informal evaluation procedures were used to assess the program. Observations revealed a change in student' attitudes and students appeared more inclined to work cooperatively as the year progressed. Emerging patterns of free reading material choices also became apparent. Students also appeared calmer, more trusting, and more willing to take risks in the classroom as the year progressed. It was observed that students learned positively from their mistakes. An increase in parental involvement was also noted. Based on the positive results of the study, further research on curriculum and instruction for high-risk students based on the theory of whole language is needed. (Four tables of data are included, and 52 references are attached. Appendixes include: Iowa Department of Public Instruction Model for Language Arts; additional classroom resources; Project Victory objectives; reading skills sequence; daily schedule of activities; weekly activities; and writing samples.) (MG)

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WHOLE LANGUAGE FOR HIGH-RISK STUDENTS:

A DESCRIPTIVE STUDY

An Abstract of a Thesis

Submitted

In Partial Fulfillment

of the Requirements for the Degree

Master of Arts in Education

Margaret Mary Sulentic

University of Northern Iowa

August 1989

CS010201

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ABSTRACT

In this study, the components of programs consistent with whole language theory and various applications of such programs were identified. The purpose of this study was to determine the appropriateness of a particular whole language program, entitled Project Victory, designed specifically for a group of high-risk, seventh-grade students. Congruent evaluation measures consistent with such programs also were examined.

Twenty students, identified as high-risk by the school district they attended, were selected as the subjects for this study. Inclusion in the study was determined on the basis of the Iowa Tests of Basic Skills (ITBS) performance scores recorded by the students during their sixth-grade testing.

The study was conducted during the 1987-1988 school year. Subjects selected for participation in this study were high-risk, seventh-grade students who attended a culturally diverse, predominantly urban, intermediate public school located in a midwestern city with a population of approximately 100,000. The city in which the school district was located is considered urban; however, the metropolitan area is located in a rural, agrarian state.

Project Victory consisted of a 3-hour morning block of language instruction based on the philosophical theory of whole language. Focusing on functional, relevant literature such as magazines, newspapers, and trade books, as opposed to traditional basal instruction, the program integrated the language processes of reading,

writing, speaking, listening, and thinking. Curriculum and instruction were based on the specific language needs of the student. Although the basal itself was not used, the 16 skills presented were taught, using a modified sequence.

Funding for the program was provided by a grant awarded to the author by the school district. Certain conditions were placed on the operation of the program, namely: using the ITBS instrument as a pre- and posttest, administering the cumulative basal test, and using the district-mandated spelling curriculum.

Formal assessments and informal measures were used to evaluate the program. Fall 1987 and spring 1988 ITBS Normal Curve Equivalency (NCE) scores were analyzed and the cumulative and diagnostic placement test that accompanied the basal program were considered. Informal evaluation measures included miscue analysis over four separated taped oral readings conducted at intervals throughout the year, the use of a holistic writing evaluation scale on selected journal topics taken from writing journals the students maintained during the course of the year, and the technique of naturalistic assessment. The researcher maintained a log addressing behavior, individual progress, and academic achievement.

Programs such as Project Victory that demonstrate effective instruction for high-risk students contribute to increasing acceptance of informal evaluation. Such programs, based on the theory of whole language, should be seriously considered when selecting curriculum and instruction for high-risk learners.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I'd like to express my gratitude and appreciation to all who contributed to this project:

Thank you Guy for being a true soul mate and thanks to my dear children, Lilly and Adam, for patience beyond your years;

Thanks team members, Jane, Ernest, Chuck, and Brian for allowing me professional judgement and freedom to make mistakes, learn, and grow;

Thank you Peggy, Shoupie, Suz, Barbara J., Vicky, Mickey, Karen, Sharon and 'drea, my sisters in spirit;

Thank you Charlene for listening so graciously;

Thank you Michael for administrative support and for lending me the wisdom of your own experiences;

Thanks especially to Dr. Ned H. Ratekin, my advisor, for guidance and understanding and to Dr. Sharon Arthur Moore and Dr. Jeannie L. Steele for direction;

and a big thank you to Joyce whose encouragement was inspirational.

I am indebted to you all.

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CHAPTER I

THE PROBLEM

Recent research in the field of reading education has strongly advocated the philosophical theory of whole language as the basis of reading curriculum and instruction (Altwerger, Edelsky, & Flores, 1987; Goodman, 1979; Goodman & Goodman, 1981, 1986; Newman, 1985; Rich, 1985; Smith, 1981). Whole language is described as a comprehension-centered theory of reading (Goodman & Goodman, 1981). In this theory, reading, writing, speaking, and listening are inseparable components of language instruction. Grounded in meaningfulness, whole language is an attitude, a perspective, a belief system that influences instructional practice (Clarke, 1987). Rather than a methodology, whole language is a philosophy that recommends instructional activities based on the specific language needs of the learner. According to Rich (1985), "whole language is an attitude of mind that provides a shape for the classroom" (p. 719). Approaches and methods congruent with the philosophy of whole language foster and encourage the use of real, functional language while utilizing whole, meaningful texts (Goodman & Goodman, 1986; Newman, 1985).

Statement of the Problem

The acquisition of language is a life-long process that begins in infancy (Forester & Mickelson, 1979; Teale, 1982). Whole language builds upon the existing language base of a child and fosters continued development of that language. Driven by their need to

communicate, children within natural, meaningful and contextualized situations, acquire speech because they need to use that language to accomplish purposes of both a personal and a social nature. Because it involves interaction, learning and using language is social activity (Newman, 1985). Children acquire oral language easily and naturally; acquisition occurs through real usage (Teale, 1982). Thus, language curriculum and instruction in schools should build on the functional language development children have attained before they started formal instruction. This instruction includes providing and maintaining the contextual setting that is necessary for continued language development. "The roots of literacy are growing strongly before schools begin instruction" (Goodman, 1979, p. 661). Continued literacy development in schools needs to build upon this naturally acquired base. The continued development of language skills, including reading, may develop well in a natural, meaningful context. Literacy is a natural extension of language development (Goodman, 1979; Goodman & Goodman, 1981).

As reported by Smith (1986), basal readers dominate reading instruction in the United States today. The trend to break down reading skills into fragments that can be stated in objectives, presented and practiced in a deluge of seatwork, and tested by multiple-choice questions does not foster literacy as a continually developing process.

Children enter school with background knowledge about their own world and each child brings to school at least 5 years language

development, as well as experience typical to their background. The philosophy of whole language assumes that formal instruction will foster further oral language development, as well as encourage the development of written expression. Rich (1985) suggested that a developmental approach to literacy, an approach which builds on the student's language and one which includes a wide range and variety of materials plus ample time to self-select, to read, to react, and to reflect should, in her opinion, become the standard practice. Rich stated that whole language benefits students because the theory perceives the learner as central to any real education. Allowing students to express themselves in their own language, in fact, validates the home language of the students. Whole language allows this validation to occur. The needs of the learner shape further instruction.

Goodman and Goodman (1981) reported that building on the background, experiences, and existing language of students must become the norm. Students, especially high-risk students (a great number of whom hail from nonstandard English-speaking backgrounds), will ultimately benefit from whole language as opposed to basal reading programs. The current prevalence of basal reading instruction which, in many instances, is the actual reading curriculum, and the subsequent evaluation by means of standardized tests, does little to foster and encourage natural literacy development. This problem of ineffective and ill-suited instruction is further compounded by students who are identified as high-risk.

In A Nation at Risk (National Commission on Excellence in Education, 1983), it is reported that "approximately 13% of all seventeen year olds can be considered functionally illiterate" (p. 8). Equally alarming is the statistic from that same report which estimates that "illiteracy among minority youth may run as high as 40%" (p.8).

Studies have been conducted to examine this high rate of illiteracy among minority youth. Three researchers (Cummins, 1986; Rist, 1973; Shannon, 1985) whose studies have explored the pattern of minority student failure concur that bicultural ambivilence (i.e., the internalization by students of an inferior status which is conveyed by society's perceptions of race in general) is the single, most important factor that affects the success/failure of minority or culturally diverse students. The anticipated failure brought about by a perceived inferior social position due to race and ethnic background, is perpetuated by traditional language instruction because traditional language instruction does not allow for or dignify dialectical differences. Cummins (1986) believed that nonstandard English contributes to the high-risk label. According to Forester and Mickelson (1979), traditional classrooms restrict the use and flow of natural language. High-risk students then, especially those who are culturally diverse, are additionally handicapped by traditional reading instruction that does not tolerate, approve, or recognize their language, does not invite expanded language development, or meet their basic communication needs. In fact, Anderson, Hiebert, Scott,

and Wilkinson (1985) and Goodman and Goodman (1986) contended that what current, traditional language and reading programs really do is to engage students in trivial activities that do little to promote literacy.

Importance of the Study

This study identified difficulties high-risk students encounter in regular reading programs and this study will identify the components of a particular program, designed for high-risk students, that is congruent with the philosophy of whole language. The study attempted to answer the following three questions:

1. What are the characteristics of a program that is consistent with the theory of whole language?

2. Does instruction that is based on the theory of whole language benefit high-risk students?

3. How does one adequately and appropriately evaluate a program congruent with whole language theory?

Limitations of the Study

This study did not include the use of a control group. Therefore, this cannot be considered a true experimental study.

Operational Definitions

Whole Language Theory/Philosophy

Whole language involves active learning and interpretive teaching wherein the simultaneous and integrated use of reading, writing, listening, speaking, and thinking processes are perceived as both inseparable elements of language instruction and as tools for

discovering knowledge. Teaching strategies based on whole language theory encourages cooperation rather than competition. Within the theory of whole language, teachers are collaborators, guides, and helpers who see students as learners first and who encourage and facilitate self-expression at the student's level of performance in a positive and risk-free environment.

For the purposes of this study, all activities, methods, approaches, techniques, and materials that are consistent with the theory of whole language in that they support students in their use of all aspects of language (Newman, 1985) and prioritize the individual language needs of the child, shall be termed whole language. Examples include, but are not limited to: Language Experience Approach (LEA); sharing book experiences; self-selecting of recreational reading material; Sustained Silent Reading (SSR); providing a range of subjects in trade books; journal writing; process writing; Sustained Silent Writing (SSW); and reading aloud to students on a regular basis. Additional examples include: furnishing resource materials; providing a variety of writing instruments, paper, and other materials; opportunities for authoring, sharing, mentoring, and publishing student writing; and creating and implementing integrated, thematic units of instruction.

Basal Reading Programs

Basal programs emphasize skill-oriented reading instruction; they are commercially prepared educational reading kits that are extensively teacher-directed, highly-structured sequences of reading

skills. Basal programs are organized around controlled vocabulary and they typically include the following packaged curricula: basal readers (books) which contain an arbitrarily chosen sequence and hierarchy of reading skills, an accompanying student practice book or workbook, worksheets, ditto masters or duplication masters for practicing discrete skills, teacher manuals that quite often suggest prereading and enrichment activities as well as pacing scales and pre- and posttests for evaluation. Many basal programs include complete management systems that set, in advance, mastery and remediation scores plus charts for recording student progress through the program. Most basal programs are sequential in that they have basal readers and complete reading programs that are organized according to grade levels with a separate basal per level or grade. In basal programs, teachers, according to Goodman (1979), are technicians in a rigid delivery system which focuses on the drill of isolated reading subskills.

High-Risk Students

Subjects are considered high-risk in this study if their composite scores on the Iowa Tests of Basic Skills (ITBS) places them in the bottom quartile of the school population. The term high-risk refers to students who are characterized by their overall lack of focus toward school and their likelihood of dropping out of school due to other frequent behaviors such as chronic absenteeism, retention in elementary grades, numerous discipline referrals, and an overall lack of organization, preparation, and responsibility toward school.

CHAPTER II

REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

The purpose of this chapter is to review recent research that identifies the components and concepts of programs based on whole language theory and the varied applications of whole language theory. Finally, research that examines problems in assessment and evaluation of whole language programs will be reviewed.

Concepts in Whole Language Instruction

As stated in the first chapter of this study and capsulized by Iowa reading teacher Jane Knapp, "whole language literacy instruction is the simultaneous, integrated teaching of reading, writing, speaking, listening, viewing and visual expression within a context that is meaningful to the language-learner" (1987, p. 14). Whole language is a theory of teaching and learning which views language instruction as an integrated and reciprocal whole (Goodman & Goodman, 1986). This instruction is based on the philosophy that language can best be taught by approaches that parallel and extend the naturally occurring process of children's oral language development (Newman, 1985; Smith, 1986; Teale, 1982). Forester and Mickelson added further support to this philosophy when they stated that "learning to read is a natural extension of learning to speak" (1979, p. 74). These two researchers also discussed the close parallels that exist between strategies children use to actually acquire language (speech) and the strategies they naturally use to acquire reading. These researchers

perceived reading acquisition as a natural and meaningful extension of oral language development. Whole language, then, promotes language for the purpose of constructing meaning in natural language environments. Furthermore, language use, including written language, as viewed through a whole language lens, is both an interactive and a recursive process, with the actual acquisition of language most naturally occurring through real usage (Altwerger, Edelsky, & Flores, 1987).

The very term whole language reflects a significant paradigm shift in the attitudes experienced by teachers and researchers in their perceptions about language instruction and student learning (Rich, 1985). Rich reported that this change in perception has been accompanied by subsequent changes in language curriculum and instructional practices. As a result of this perceptual movement toward whole language, some districts and their teachers are utilizing various methods, resources, and techniques that fit the actual and specific language needs of the students.

Smith (1981) also concluded that basing instruction on student needs opposes the more traditional method of instruction that requires students to "get through" packaged reading programs. He stated that packaged reading programs are designed to satisfy predetermined goals and objectives which may or may not apply to the needs of a particular student or group of students. Such programs fail to provide the hands-on experience and practical language instruction needed by high-risk students. Sagor (1988) found that programmatic instruction

requires students to work in ways that feel unnatural; such instruction also sets students up for failure. Despite the supporting research and acceptance of whole language as the basis for both curriculum and instruction, widespread implementation has been slow. Despite the fact that no research results prove that children learn language best using traditional basal programs, the ingrained, established, and traditional systematic use of basals pervades language instruction (Larrick, 1987).

The thrust of current research has been to lament the fact that, in spite of the growing body of existing research which supports the philosophy of whole language, the majority of language and reading curriculums and language teachers continue to emphasize "essential" reading skills over actual reading (Allington, 1977; Allington, 1980; Bussis, 1982; Zakariya, 1985). Allington (1983) conducted studies that examined the differences that exist in the instruction allocated readers of differing abilities. Allington found that less reading is accomplished by students labeled as poor readers due primarily to teachers' misallotment of instructional time coupled with an overemphasis on oral reading and decoding. The high-risk student in the traditional classroom, who is often a poor reader, receives less of what is actually needed in terms of instructional reading time (Allington, 1980). It would appear then, that those who need the most instruction and the most instructional time are actually allowed fewer reading opportunities and less instruction overall.

The solution, as Newman (1985) suggested, is to put the theory of whole language into practice by providing students more opportunities for self-selection and more time to actually practice reading. The goal of whole language and ultimately all reading instruction is to have children read for meaning. This comprehension-centered theory of reading (Goodman & Goodman, 1981) involves reading as an integrated and functional part of all other reading activities. Morrow (1986) believed that teachers must cease spending their instructional reading time on overt skill development; they must begin to encourage voluntary reading.

Culturally diverse children grow up in a distinctive environment which includes a particular language system. These students, especially those identified as high-risk, need an educational system that includes language instruction which recognizes their strengths, their abilities, and their cultural views and backgrounds and which infuses them into their language instruction and into the entire educational system (Hale, 1982). Smith (1981) argued a critical point regarding whether accountability for teaching children to read and write lies with people or programs. Currently, in the United States, programs do the teaching and programs decide what the children will be taught. At the heart of the issue is the question: Who controls the classroom, teachers or technology? Smith pointed out that programmed instruction does not teach literacy. He stated that, in fact, programmed instruction competes with teachers for classroom control; in such a competition, teachers, and students, particularly high-risk

students, lose. Smith contended that programs do not have the ability to fit instruction to learners' needs. Unlike teachers who espouse whole language, programs are irrelevant, disassociated facts and skills that negate personal choice and individuality, according to Smith (1981).

More recently, Smith (1985) again criticized programmatic instruction as attempts by anyone outside of the classroom who decides in advance and in sequence, what both teachers and learners should do next. This type of instruction not only strips the teacher of control but it rarely engages a learner in functional reading. Smith accurately perceived programmed instruction as not only fragmented but trivial as well. He further asserted that a program's only real purpose is its own instructional end. He emphatically stated that "All programs fractionate learning" (p. 637). The ramifications of selecting programs over people are especially profound when considering high-risk students. Whole language allows teachers to focus on the language needs of learners, making it especially appropriate for high-risk students. A language program or a basal reader, no matter how comprehensive it may be, cannot individualize for at-risk students according to their degree of need. A whole language curriculum presents a number of advantages for teaching children from culturally diverse families or environments where a literate climate has not been established or encouraged. Tompkins and McGee (1983) discussed various programs aimed at improving and increasing Standard English usage which use children's literature as

language models for instruction. Veatch (1986) also supported the use of good children's literature as an excellent language model for students whose home language is not Standard English. The act of simply reading aloud to students, or holding discussions about children's books, incorporating storytelling, and involving other meaningful oral language expansion activities in the curriculum compensates for a lack of exposure to books and experiences as does offering children a variety and range of reading materials. A whole language curriculum with congruent instruction invites experimentation with various language modes. Students who have little experience with written language become more comfortable with print because whole language promotes language usage. It doesn't matter which kind of child you work with in terms of ability, background, or speech. What does matter is how you modify individual objectives and materials to meet a learner's individual needs (Palincsar, 1987).

The demands of whole language require complex classroom environments. Within these environments, certain conditions need to exist (Anderson et al., 1985; Bussis, 1982). Adequate, abundant and various reading materials of varying reading levels must be accessible to students. This ensures that all students' interests and ability levels are accommodated. Sufficient time to read, to write, and to share must also be provided. In order for these conditions to exist, teachers must know their students' likes, dislikes, weaknesses, and strengths. Additionally, teachers must build into their programs time for working individually with their students. The more frequently the

elements of adequate time and appropriate resources are implemented, the better chance students, especially high-risk students, have in not only successfully remaining in school, but in achieving their reading potential and in ultimately becoming literate and functional adults.

In addition to providing adequate resources and an environment that encourages literacy, teaching styles and student learning styles must also be addressed. In 1986, the Iowa State Department of Public Instruction (DPI) created a philosophy and established state mandates for the language arts. This philosophy stated that, "Language is a process of social interaction" (p. 5). This philosophical stance included viewing language as a continually developing process and perceived a school language arts program as beginning with children's existing language capacities and basing integrated language arts instruction on student need. The DPI believed that, "School programs must empower individual students to achieve their full linguistic potential" (p. 5). This model stressed the interactive nature of the language processes and the fact that language usage is cognitive. (See Appendix A.)

Goodman and Goodman (1986) stated that we must keep language whole and involve students in using it functionally and purposefully to meet their own individual language needs. Reading and writing are human activities and children learn best while actually engaging in them. Students who have experienced the least amount of success in learning, those usually labeled as high-risk, are the very students who need the most personal contact with the teacher (Smith, 1981).

With its emphasis on knowing the ability and performance levels of students, whole language not only fosters the continued development of reading and writing skills, but can also provide the personal contact necessary for successful learning for high-risk individuals.

Calkins (1983) conducted numerous case studies of children's writing. During the course of her research, she established that while students are writing they are also reading; the act of composing involves reading naturally. Classrooms in which process writing is implemented also provide opportunities for teachers to interact on a close personal basis with their students who are actively engaged in composition. The encouragement of this continued writing/reading development is merely an extension of oral language development.

The whole language approach joins together the instruction of reading, writing, listening, and speaking in ways unique to each teacher. "There is no 'pure' whole language theory and no prescribed whole language teaching program" (Melton, 1988, p. 1). Teachers who embrace the theory of whole language tailor both curriculum and their instruction to the specific and individual language needs of their students. The teacher is in a pivitol role as (s)he creates and provides an environment that entices children to actively participate in the activities offered in the classroom. The teacher functions as a learning facilitator as opposed to simply a content-oriented instructor (Melton, 1988).

Keeping in mind that whole language is a theory and not a prescribed, set curriculum or definitive set of instructional

approaches, there are however, elements that are characteristic of the theory of whole language. Rupp, (1986) who uses a whole language format with elementary English as a Second Language (ESL) students, set forth several components that he perceives as characteristic of whole language:

1. Whole language uses of whole, meaningful reading materials.

2. Whole language uses abundant, high-quality, children's literature.

3. Whole language encourages students to utilize their backgrounds, knowledge, and experiences.

4. Whole language allows students to take risks,

5. Whole language treats literacy learning as a language development process.

6. Whole language focuses on comprehension and communication.

7. Whole language promotes reading and writing as enjoyable, useful, and purposeful activities.

What is significant about Rupp's work is that his rationale for implementing whole language with ESL students is similar to the reasons why whole language is so appropriately suited for high-risk students, especially those high-risk students who come from culturally diverse backgrounds. Whole language bases instruction and curriculum on students' strengths and weaknesses; it builds upon their existing language foundations.

Goodman and Goodman (1981) embraced almost identical elements in their whole language, comprehension-centered reading program. These

two researchers also advocated creating a classroom climate that accepts and encourages risk taking; the use of whole, meaningful, relevant texts; expanding on whatever language base the learner brings to school; and finally, through both curriculum and instruction, expressing the philosophy that learning to read is a natural extension of language development.

A special committee established by the British government through the Department of Education and Science and chaired by Sir Alan Bullock investigated language instruction. Their report, A Language for Life (1975), decreed that children should be instructed in such a way that they acquire skills that are employed in mature or adult reading and that teachers should strive to create situations that generate "natural" language in all its forms. The committee established three basic objectives which they admitted were simple to state but difficult to implement. Those three recommendations are:

1. Students need to be able to cope with the reading that is required in each subject area in the curriculum.

2. Students need to acquire the degree of competence which will enable them to meet the language of an adult in society when they leave school.

3. They should perceive reading as an enjoyable and personal lifelong activity.

The report further recommended that schools commit to developing policies for implementing language across the curriculum, including the concept of language learning as a corporate responsibility. In

such an ideal situation, teacher specialists would coordinate and facilitate language instruction but teachers of all subjects would share the responsibility of teaching language. The report presented research studies which concluded that children learn as surely by writing and speaking as they do by reading. Stressing that language competence is acquired incrementally through the interaction of writing, talking, reading, and experience, the committee responsible for the report supported the philosophy that language needs to be learned in the course of using it in daily experiences both in and outside of the classroom. Although the report concluded that no one method or approach exists to solve all language learning difficulties, committee members advocated certain practices for optimum language learning to take place. These premises include: (a) increasing the amount and range of voluntary, self-selected reading; (b) providing an abundant supply of literature; (c) recognizing the importance of a variety of literary forms; (d) encouraging informal speech as a legitimate language learning activity; (e) accepting dialectical differences in English; (f) providing formal spelling instruction generating from students' writing mistakes and finally, (g) providing increased opportunities for students to experience more one-to-one relationships with adults, possibly by involving parents as teacher supports.

While emphasizing the roles of strategies, methods, environments, and experience, Fillion (1983) charged that too often language instruction "fails to exploit students' language--especially their

informal, expressive talk and writing as a learning resource in our classroom" (p. 702). Using the existing language of high-risk students could involve them to the extent that they take charge of their learning. This involvement could very well change their attitudes towards school in general. He further asserted that there are three fundamental tenets of "whole language," which he termed "language across the curriculum" (p. 703). Those three tenets are:

1. The acquisition of language develops almost exclusively through purposeful use.

2. Learning takes place through speaking and writing activities.

3. Language use aids overall cognitive development.

Encouraging teachers to create their own curriculum and to initiate instructional procedures that are not only relevant but that also meet the language needs of their unique student populations espouses whole language. This element appears to be a primary consideration of the philosophy of whole language as interpreted by these aforementioned educators and researchers.

Goodman (1987) epitomized the whole language philosophy by declaring that while publishing companies and editors may be familiar with students in general, it is teachers that know their students personally. Teachers are aware of their students' strengths, weaknesses, likes, dislikes, cultures, and family situations. It is teachers who are the most well-equipped to assess skill development and to use their professional expertise to decide how to instruct their students. Goodman explained the whole method of instruction as

being shaped, directed, and guided exclusively by the strengths, needs, and abilities of students. This is the essence of implementing the philosophy and the theory of whole language.

Applications of Whole Language Theory

Referencing language arts as verbal thinking, teachers in three Berkeley, California elementary schools decided that they could no longer justify the separation of language nor could they ignore their responsibility to integrate language into the general curriculum (Buckley, 1986). Seizing upon the concept of social-centered language, the teachers involved in the project decided on the following premises upon which they proposed to base their curriculum:

1. Language instruction can best be facilitated by a 2-hour block.
2. Basals, which need evaluation before adoption, are not complete programs.
3. Literature must augment basal programs.
4. Oral expression must be encouraged.
5. Daily writing time must be provided.
6. Students' difficulty in oral and written expression should determine further instruction.
7. Spelling instruction should generate from writing mistakes.
8. Handwriting should be incorporated and encouraged when students work on final drafts.

This project succeeded primarily due to teachers' ownership of the program. Teachers decided to make the changes and, in doing so, they

allowed creativity and individuality back into their classrooms and into their teaching. By deciding to change their thinking and subsequently their curriculums and their instructional procedures, this group of California teachers initiated the process of converting whole language theory into educational practice. Additionally, this group of educators received specific inservice training in this theory which resulted in a guarantee of sorts in assuring support, empathy, and adequate resources to rely upon when they encountered difficulties in actual implementation.

Focusing on a whole language program for the middle grades in the Northwest Territories in Canada, Mickelson and Davies (1987) created and implemented a whole language program of instruction as an alternative to traditional approaches. These two, one of whom is a professor at the University of Victoria and the other who is a practicing teacher and doctoral candidate, discussed the philosophy and role of a whole language teacher in an intermediate classroom. They additionally described a typical day in Davies' classroom. The description included combining the task of taking attendance with time for necessary reminders and possibly updates about important events including both social and academic functions. Students also spent 30 minutes daily on Uninterrupted Sustained Silent Reading (USSR) plus time for responding in personal writing journals to self-selected reading, daily editing of their writing or what is commonly referred to as Daily Oral Language (DOL), and logic exercises that involve analogy. Additional activities included 30 to 40 minutes daily of

structured writing; reading aloud to students on a daily basis; math instruction; social studies and science instruction infused with art activities; and finally, quiet time to reflect on what the student has accomplished that particular day. Mickelson and Davies believed in the philosophy of whole language, stating that skills work comes out of the children's work and their language use. In addition, they stressed the importance of adequate and abundant reading materials and the importance of free access to books and libraries. Davies incorporated a monthly trip to the public library, even at 30 below, as a regular part of her curriculum. Davies also stressed the fact that her students have almost complete choice in terms of materials. She merely guided their selection and, from time to time, attempted to try to encourage their choice in other directions or genres. Her assessment was naturalistic or almost totally on an observational basis. The two researchers concluded by stating that students in Davies' whole language classroom read for different reasons and purposes; they write for different purposes; and that they speak and think for different purposes, "just like we do!" (Mickelson & Davies, 1987, p. 22).

Melton (1988) described how her school system has also attempted to implement both curriculum and instructional practices that have slowly but surely moved her district toward whole language. The approach of the Iowa City Community Schools was to provide adequate support and relevant, research-based inservice training which supplied teachers with practical strategies that allowed them to modify basal

instruction, take risks in their classrooms, and make particular changes at their own individual pace. The comfort level of teachers as individuals to become involved in the program was taken into consideration. Formal implementation began during the 1983-84 school year. During this academic year, a team of kindergarten teachers worked with Diane DeFord (Ohio State University) and Louise Beltramo (University of Iowa) to develop a working and specific philosophy. Additionally, they received assistance from the district's language arts resource specialist, as well as assistance and input from district teachers who had participated in the Iowa Writing Workshop Project (IWP). As novel units had already been a part of the district's curriculum, this also was incorporated into their instructional plans. Throughout this process, teachers in the Iowa City system received encouragement, assistance on demand, and adequate inservicing which was built into their school year and financed by the Iowa City district. Teachers also experienced collegiality among both teaching professionals and administrators. Iowa City has continued implementation and the district's teachers have created a Literacy Guide aimed at assisting teachers in planning. Whole language in Iowa City has continued to evolve amid adequate support, administrative encouragement, and teacher commitment.

In a 1980 study by the Department of Education in the State of California, Veatch (1986) reported that teachers who had input into the selection of what reading program was to be used had students who showed the most student reading achievement. These teachers were able

to use their own judgement in their teaching and they based their instruction on the needs of students. Veatch went on to discuss how, initially, teachers who wished to design their own programs and instruction faced opposition and criticism because their teaching was perceived as chaotic and disorganized. Veatch then discussed structured processes and orderly procedures those teachers at the top of the achievement ladder used in their classrooms. Those approaches included: the use of language experience (LEA); invented spelling; self-selection of individual reading material; abundant, varied forms of literature; and frequent, regular student-teacher conferences about both reading and writing accomplished by the students. Veatch concluded that those who experienced more achievement in terms of pupil progress also experienced increased professional judgement, a factor inherent in programs consistent with whole language theory.

Kerekes and Burchett (1986) also attempted to implement a program based on whole language theory in their primary classrooms in Australia. In lieu of the traditional basal program which primarily consisted of utilizing the basal reader and accompanying basal package of materials, these two teachers chose to implement a literature-based reading program for their students. Although the two teachers had a strong commitment to a literature-based program, they lacked support from their senior staff (administration), and they lacked an established program to use as a working model for their classroom. Additionally, although they had explained their program to their students' parents at the customary fall parent evening, they faced

criticism from a small but very vocal minority. These parents' anxiety and antagonism toward change continued throughout the year. It wasn't until 4 weeks into the second term that, when two language arts advisors were assigned to their school, these two teachers began to experience a turnaround in their program. The two language arts advisors helped Kerekes and Burchett restructure their reading program, giving it more focus and cohesion. They provided a variety of activities designed to extend the review process of books students selected for reading. Included among the activities the advisors suggested to Kerekes and Burchett to be infused into their existing reading program were: journal writing that responded to students' self-selected reading; discussions; an expanded choice in review processes; small- and large-group activities; and individual language activities. Kerekes and Burchett also chose to survey their parents. The previously silent majority came forth and displayed an overwhelmingly positive support for the program, reporting that the amount of time their children spent actually reading and discussing what they had read increased. These two teachers overcame their initial difficulties and roadblocks; they persevered with their "belief that reading should be purposeful and become a lifetime practice" (Kerekes & Burchett, 1986, p.25).

To conclude, research exists which validates the theory of whole language curriculum and instruction. Both individuals and school systems are attempting to implement whole language in a variety of

ways. However, the area of evaluation continues to cause difficulty for those attempting to move toward whole language.

Problems in Assessment

Recognizing that innovations in attitude and practice have occurred in the areas of language learning, reading curriculum, and reading instruction suggests that testing and assessment procedures must also be revised if they are to adequately and appropriately evaluate the student learning yielded by whole language curriculum and instructional procedures. Perhaps the biggest challenge for a whole language teacher is the area of evaluation. Many whole language teachers and districts working toward the implementation of whole language utilize, among their evaluation techniques, teacher-observation methods, writing samples, booklogs, and reading samples on tape or records of such assessment. These records include what students have read, (i.e., books, magazines, or short stories) as well as samples of other work intended to show growth. These samples provide documentation over a period of time.

Culyer (1984) called for the rejection of the use of achievement tests as evaluation tools. He offered three points that support his recommendation, based on the assertion that standardized tests "are constructed to assure that one-half of the nation's population will score below grade placement" (p. 236). Because all children take these tests, high-risk students are unfairly pitted against their more fortunate peers. He contended that most standardized tests actually over-measure instructional levels by anywhere from 1 to 4 years, that

these instruments really measure students' frustration levels; and that timing and guessing influence standardized test scores. Although Culyer aimed his remarks at Chapter 1 programs, these very programs are directed toward students who are labeled early as disadvantaged, a label that can quite easily convert to high-risk by the time these students are at the intermediate level.

Culyer's findings were echoed in Becoming a Nation of Readers (Anderson et al., 1985) which reported that standardized tests do not measure a students' ability to read, whether it be for recreation or for knowledge. The report stated that standardized tests can only provide quick, easy, cheap, and fairly reliable ways to assess reading proficiency. Standardized tests fail to take into consideration a student's prior knowledge or reading ability. The short reading passages selected for tests can contain unfamiliar topics which in turn can yield poor performances. The report also discussed the possibility of standardized test scores being influenced by "test wise" students who have either developed or been instructed in test-taking strategies. Becoming a Nation of Readers concluded its section on testing and reading instruction by advocating informal assessment measures such as: reading aloud grade level material fluently, writing adequate summaries from content area books, and requiring students to explain plots contained in unfamiliar, grade-appropriate fiction, over the use of standardized tests as evaluation tools. "It is likely that overemphasis on performance on skill mastery tests imbalances a reading program, leading attention away from the

integrated act of reading" (Anderson, et al., 1985, p. 101). Three suggestions were offered by the authors of this landmark report. These suggestions called for: (a) more comprehensive assessments of reading and writing, (b) tests that reflect the real goals of reading instruction, and (c) a change in attitude towards the importance and place of standardized tests in reading instruction.

The authors of Becoming a Nation of Readers (1985) believed that these kinds of tests do not adequately assess the reading process; rather, they see their use as just a partial and inexpensive way of assessing reading proficiency. Both Goodman and Goodman (1981) and Bussis (1982) lent support to the conviction that teachers need to spend time working individually with students, listening to them read, and discussing with them the literature that the students are reading.

Moore (1983) successfully debated the case for naturalistic assessment, a means of evaluation that is based upon the practice of observing students throughout their day as they use a variety of reading materials. Moore noted that, while employing the evaluation techniques of naturalistic assessment, teachers observe students who discuss stories; teachers notice student miscues during oral reading; teachers keep records of both what students read and the amount of time students spend reading. These observations, coupled with cumulative writing folders and test scores, show evidence of long-term growth.

Another method for assessing the strengths and weaknesses of students in the reading process involves miscue analysis. Goodman and

Goodman (1974) perceived this technique as a valid means of assessing the psycholinguistics of reading--the study of relationships between language and thought. They contended that miscues are not simply errors, but that they show us much more about readers' strengths than they do about their weaknesses. As a reader uses print symbols and his or her language competence to comprehend, miscues can reflect how the reader is actually getting to the meaning of what they are reading. Miscue analysis can provide two measures of reading comprehension: one measure is a score based on the degree to which a reader's miscues affect the author's intended meaning; the second measure involves a child's retelling of the story after reading the story. Goodman and Goodman contended that miscue analysis shows that many students, especially those in the middle and secondary grades who are labeled as poor readers, do a much better job of reading and comprehending than they indicated by their performance on standardized tests. By focusing attention on reading for meaning, by encouraging prediction, by permitting students sufficient time to practice the art of reading, and by providing choice in student selection of reading materials coupled with evaluation by way of miscue analysis, student progress in reading can be more accurately addressed.

Tucsonans Applying Whole Language (TAWL) (Marek et al., 1984), consisted of a group of professional teachers in Tucson, Arizona who were committed to the whole language philosophy of teaching and who were very concerned with the issue of effective, appropriate, and adequate evaluation of such classrooms that implement this philosophy.

These professionals also advocated evaluation concepts centered on both observation and interaction with students as they actually engage in functional language use. These researchers emphasized that student growth in a whole language setting needs to be evaluated in a context that is sensitive to the opportunities that are being provided for flexible language usage, the attitudes students have about language, including reading, and finally, the actual knowledge that students possess about language. TAWL recommended the following evaluation measures in addition to observation, interaction, and analysis of actual language use by students: anecdotal records; print awareness evaluation; oral language evaluation; the use of reading interest inventories; miscue analysis; a writing interview; and the evaluation of writing samples. These measures are organized around areas relating to specific language uses and the T.A.W.L. group in Tucson firmly believes that the key to effective evaluation is the continuous and ongoing informal assessment of student language use.

Mayher and Brause (1986) further supported the position of requiring evaluation to match the changes brought about by whole language. They felt that teachers who implement whole language have a responsibility to articulate and to share measures that they are using to evaluate student growth and development. Specifically, they recommended the use of student writing folders as a means of assessing student growth and the use of reading folders which document the amount and variety of reading that students accomplish throughout the course of a school year. Mayher and Brause strongly suggested that

effective communication with parents and the public to demonstrate how children are learning in language-rich classrooms is the responsibility of the classroom teacher. They believed that there is no reason why students can't be evaluated on the basis of what they are actually doing in the classroom but that the responsibility for demonstrating growth lies with the educator. They further contended that such evaluation requires a commitment of professional time, energy, and resources, and that continued evaluation by means of standardized tests is no real, viable option for the whole language classroom.

Wangberg and Reutten (1986) also advocated analysis of student writing samples to assess writing ability. This team referred to recent research that indicates the close relationship between reading and writing as support for their form of evaluation. These two researchers also supported the concept of the importance of a learner's own oral language development and background experience. They validated the use of the language experience approach (LEA) to naturally extend oral language development within the environment of the whole language classroom. They suggested a Basic Writing Scale which they developed to evaluate growth in writing ability. If a whole language classroom requires a great deal of student writing, then it only seems appropriate to assess writing growth through the actual evaluation of student writing samples. Wangberg and Reutten submitted that a holistic method of evaluation is the most appropriate technique to use with the whole language approach. Holistic writing

evaluation judges the whole piece of writing as opposed to compiling individual errors. This type of evaluation is done quickly and impressionistically as well as systematically. It includes: (a) a rating scale, (b) sample papers, (c) a controlled environment for reading essays, (d) multiple independent scoring, and (e) checks on the scoring in progress. They concluded by saying that evaluation of a whole language approach that enables students to be active language users must focus on student writing samples. This type of evaluation gives teachers a general view of student writing ability and it offers a perspective that is not included in standardized measures.

This review of recent literature demonstrates that some researchers advocate whole language theory and some are suggesting implementation, yet there exists a misconception about whole language, especially in the area of evaluation and assessment. Clearly, evaluation procedures must be revised. The documented research and evidence in the following chapter describes a specific program, designed to implement a whole language program for high-risk students.

CHAPTER III

A CLASSROOM DESCRIPTION

The purpose of this chapter is to provide a detailed description of a particular program consistent with the theory of whole language. It describes assessment measures that were used to evaluate the appropriateness of whole language curriculum and instruction for high-risk students.

The language needs of high-risk students are specific to them as individuals. Often, because of cultural diversity, their needs can vary greatly from the language needs of the general school population which is not considered high-risk. Therefore, high-risk, culturally diverse students have special language needs. Curriculum and instructional practices must be closely aligned to meet the specific needs of a given population of high-risk students in order to enhance their language usage skills. Additionally, allowances must be made for adequate amounts of instructional time in order to meet the needs of these high-risk students.

Basal reading series are considered by some to be only half of a district's reading program. I was, however, in a situation where the basal program adopted by the district in which I was employed dictated the reading curriculum of the district. Reading and language arts were taught as separate subjects. Additionally, within the language arts class, two grades were given--one for language arts and a separate grade for spelling which was mandated by a district set of

lists and procedures. I was bothered by what I considered a skeletal curriculum and by this method of instruction. I felt that this type of teaching fell short of meeting students' language needs; more importantly, I felt that my students' learning was affected adversely. As early as my first year of teaching in the system, I had begun to modify both the sequence of basal skills and the method of instruction prescribed by the basal series purchased by the district. I also attempted to supplement what scant literature was included in the basal series with short stories, other literary forms, and the concept of SSR, or what I referred to as free reading. I observed that my high-risk students suffered due to their lack of reading proficiency and that these deficiencies surfaced in their content area classes. As my knowledge about whole language increased, I made additional modifications both in terms of curriculum and in terms of instructional practices. Trained as a high school English teacher, I returned to graduate school because I wanted to learn more about the reading process and I was determined to figure out a better way to teach reading, especially to the learner labeled as high-risk.

Wanting to provide options in my teaching, wanting to offer more choices for my students, and wanting to more closely align curriculum and instruction to fit the language needs of my students, I made the decision to pursue an avenue that would enable me to do so. I wrote, applied for, and was awarded a district-funded educational grant designed to implement a program based on whole language theory and

focused specifically on students identified by the district as high-risk. The grant focused on increasing comprehension and it targeted two building goals--working with students identified as lower quartile and increasing student achievement in vocabulary on the ITBS. I believed that receiving this grant would allow me enough resources, adequate instructional time, and administrative support to validate implementing practices in the classroom that were consistent with whole language theory.

The actual grant application reached the committee charged with its review in May of 1987, was introduced, and debated. The council appointed to approve or disapprove such 1-year, innovative projects adjourned for the summer after the May meeting. It wasn't until the first fall council meeting on September 14, 1987 that this project, entitled "Project Victory," received approval by a unanimous vote. What follows is a description of that program carried out over the course of 1 academic year.

A Classroom Description

This study was conducted during the 1987-88 school year. Subjects selected for participation in this study were high-risk, seventh-grade students who attended a culturally diverse, predominantly urban, intermediate public school in a fairly large (population 100,000) midwestern city. Although the school district and metropolitan area can be considered urban, the city was located in a rural, agrarian, midwestern state. At the time of this study, approximately 750 students attended this school housing Grades 6, 7,

and 8. Demographic information on this population follows: Grade 6--233; Grade 7--210; Grade 8--249. Of the total population, 392 were males and 358 were females. The student population was 29.5% minority with 221 students classified as minority status and 529 identified as nonminority students. The building also had a significant mobility rate, reporting 62 students entering school late during the 1987-88 academic year and 71 students who withdrew before the year's end. Additionally, 57.2% of this attendance center's population qualified for the federally subsidized free and reduced lunch program. Qualification for this lunch program indicates a low socioeconomic background; qualifying for free and reduced lunches also enables applicants to qualify for federally funded Chapter 1 programs. Of the 750 students enrolled at this school, 119 of them received special education services through the local area education agency. Of those 119 special education students, 61 received resource room assistance; 23 were identified as being mentally disabled (M.D.) and were placed in self-contained classrooms; 12 were labeled as learning disabled (L.D.) students; and 23 were classified as behaviorally disabled (B.D.) who were also placed in self-contained situations. Based on ITBS composite performance scores, roughly 25% of the student body fell into the lower quartile bracket. These lower quartile students were perceived as the high-risk population and these composite scores were the only factor used by the district to identify the high-risk component (Waterloo Community School District, 1987-1989).

This school, as well as all intermediate schools in the district, was organized according to the team concept. Each regular education grade level was divided into an "A" team and a "B" team with students assigned to a particular grade level divided evenly between the two teams. The academic team at each grade level was composed of five teachers, with each teacher being responsible for one of the following academic subject areas: reading, language arts (which includes spelling as a separate grade), science, mathematics, and social studies. However, it was not uncommon for language arts instructors to teach sections of reading or for reading teachers to also instruct language arts classes.

The students included in this study were determined solely on their ITBS composite performance scores from their sixth-grade testing. For the duration of this grant and subsequent study, 4 students were deleted from the study for the following reasons: 1 student was placed in a chronic-disruptive facility within the district due to repeated disruptive behavior; 1 was transferred to the student's home attendance center as a result of numerous discipline infractions resulting in revocation of the student's open enrollment status; 1 moved to a different state to reside with relatives; and 1 student joined the program midyear when the student's family moved into the school's geographical boundary. These 4 students are indicative of high-risk learners whose family mobility and disruptive behaviors greatly inhibit their potential to be successful students.

Twenty students were included in this research study; of the 20 subjects included, 10 had already been retained prior to their seventh-grade placement. Additionally, 3 students were eligible for and received Chapter 1 assistance and 4 students qualified and received the maximum amount (2 hours) of L.D. resource room services available. According to district records and standards, all 20 students were functioning at least one grade level below their placement and all 20 were placed in a sixth-grade basal for their reading instruction. Demographic information on the subjects appears in Table 1.

Table 1

Project Victory Subjects' Demographic Information

	Total	Retained	Special Services
Minority Male	9	3	4
Minority Female	4	3	1
Nonminority Male	4	1	2
Nonminority Female	3	3	1

The author carefully planned this program seeking input from the particular team of teachers to which I was assigned. Each person on

my team was responsible for one academic area: science, social studies, math, language arts, or reading. I obtained copies of content area textbooks and familiarizd myself with their content. My program utilized a unique scheduling situation combining, in a 3-hour morning block, reading, language arts, and a skills class which was conducted like a structured study hall. In lieu of a basal reader, accompanying workbook, worksheets, and a language arts text, the curriculum and instructional procedures were based on the students' content area texts, and incorporated the use of five magazines, local daily newspapers, and other "real" literature. A $500.00 trade book budget from the grant enabled the purchase of materials from various sources in an effort to enhance instruction and and to make language learning as meaningful as possible. (See Appendix B.) Additionally, input was sought from the building media specialist in terms of utilizing the $500.00 for trade books and and other available materials.

During the summer of 1987, I wrote the curriculum for Project Victory as part of an instructional practicum taken in conjunction with my graduate course work. I met over the summer with my head principal in an effort to allay concerns raised by the district's director of intermediate programs and in an honest effort to also keep this administrator informed and thus supportive. I also agreed to a meeting with my head principal, the district language arts-reading coordinator, and the associate superintendent of curriculum and instruction. I needed to make them aware of what I would be teaching

and how I intended to proceed. Even though I had been granted permission to discontinue use of basal readers and accompanying materials, I was held to teaching the skills the series offered. I was also required to administer the periodic and cumulative tests as evaluators of my program. In addition, it was specified that an ITBS would be administered in May to serve as a posttest. The associate superintendent, the language arts-reading coordinator, and my principal also insisted on regularly scheduled meetings. They wanted to monitor the program in order to determine that I didn't deviate too far from the district reading program or engage in radical practices.

My first step concerning the curriculum of Project Victory was to write learning objectives for the year that reflected meaningful, purposeful, and relevant instructional goals. I consulted the ITBS composite scores of my subjects, the basal skills, and content material when writing these objectives. (See Appendix C.)

My next step was to consider the reorganization of the skills that I was required to teach. I was careful to align my modifications with the curriculum of both the science and the social studies series used in seventh grade. My purpose was to make instruction as relevant as possible by utilizing the content material that would be required of my students. My modified skill sequence reflects this incorporation of content area material. (See Appendix D.)

Because my project was approved 2 weeks into the school year, the schedules of these 20 subjects as well as the schedules of the entire team had to be adjusted. The grade-level administrator assigned to my

team, who was supportive of this program, rescheduled the entire team to place these 20 high-risk students, as identified by ITBS composite scores, into my Project Victory program. This massive schedule change was also supported by my team of teachers. Although they approved the schedule change, they voiced concerns and skepticism as to why I wanted what they termed a "mini-B.D. self-contained class" for 3 hours daily.

On my first day with students, a reading interest inventory, or what I referred to as a reading survey, was administered. This was intended to put students at ease and to gather information on their reading interests. I also explained the Project Victory program to my students and the way that it differed from the traditional reading classroom.

I spent a great deal of time initially on appropriate social skill behaviors using 10 of the behavior strands from the Boys Town Behavior Model (Black, Down, & Bastien, 1982) as acceptable classroom behavior. This was necessary as certain individuals within this group of students exhibited disruptive behaviors. Such behaviors are quite often associated with high-risk learners, learners who had become accustomed to repeated failure within the school system. The behaviors chosen for focus were as follows:

1. How to get the teacher's attention
2. How to make a request
3. How to stay on task
4. How to accept criticism or a consequence

5. How to negotiate
6. How to listen
7. How to follow instructions
8. How to greet someone
9. How to disagree appropriately
10. How to problem solve

The modeling of these desired behaviors and appropriate responses was established early and I maintained these behavior strands throughout the year. The strands were displayed prominently in the classroom and they became my behavior modification plan for these high-risk students. Modeling and cueing were done in a variety of ways and reinforced through role playing and discussion; I attempted to be as consistent about these as possible. Developing good study habits along with time management and time prioritizing was also addressed early on and it was monitored closely throughout the year. I felt that appropriate behavior (e.g., acceptable ways to get the teacher's attention) and good study habits were two essential skills that my students needed to acquire.

Students attended my class for the first 3 hours of the day; because they were assigned to me the 1st hour of the day, I also had this group as a homeroom unit. Each day the modified 3-hour block of instruction was broken down into different areas of concentration. (See Appendix E.)

Each day began with a daily update. This update included reminders about academic tasks such as quizzes, tests, and due dates

of major assignments, as well as social events like upcoming dances or assemblies, conferences, shortened school days, school concerts and various community events. This was also a time for students to express themselves. Current events were covered and often students would share and report happenings they had either read about in the newspaper or heard on the radio. This update activity led to any record keeping students were responsible for such as spelling charts or book cards which were used to record books that were self-selected and read. Sharing time also included my participation and I used the time to provide updates and to share information. That was the most opportune time to share current stories from that day's newspaper. My original grant called for eight daily newspapers but, due to a miscalculation on my part, I requested eight newspapers but only quoted a price for one subscription. Project Victory received money for just a single subscription. A committee member suggested contacting a corporate sponsor for additional copies. I followed this advice and ended up getting one copy daily of the Des Moines Register from the grant and 10 issues of U.S.A. Today courtesy of my corporate sponsor. Each Saturday night I would obtain out-of-town editions from a local newsstand so that my classroom had an abundant supply of various newspapers. Reading articles aloud and assigning them to be read silently was almost a ritual. Comparing coverage on the same events from paper to paper was a favorite student activity. In addition, I was able to use newspapers to teach many of the basal skills as well as many basic reading skills while at the same time

offering relevant, interesting, and timely lessons. Some of these reading skills included: sequencing, generalizing, implicit main idea, prediction, facts and opinions, slanted writing, qualifying words, cause and effect, and comparisons. Additionally, I used this resource to teach the different parts of a newspaper and newspaper jargon. At the same time, students were using newspapers to learn fundamental reading skills; many were also developing an appreciation of the medium and cultivating a fondness for reading newspapers. Without being totally conscious of the fact, I was also encouraging reading as a life-long leisure activity. The newspaper resources in the classroom enabled me to surround my students with a print-rich environment; I exploited print in an effort to make language a relevant activity for my students.

The second activity of the day was usually what we referred to as journaling. Each student maintained a spiral notebook of topics which they addressed through their writing. At the beginning of the year, students were supplied with topics to write about. As the year progressed, students gradually appeared more comfortable when they were writing and were increasingly able to select their own topics. They could also respond to events in the books that they were reading. SSW was infused through the use of personal journals. Journals were records of the students personal opinions, feelings, and ideas. They were considered confidential property and they were stored safely in the room at all times. Journaling encouraged written expression and I made every attempt possible to respond to journal entries on a daily

basis. My responses were intended to spark further written response and I did not correct the writing, spelling, or mechanics. This practice was extremely time-consuming but students began to expect a reply and many would then answer my responses. This unconscious application of dialogue was an added bonus. Students became more relaxed with this activity as the year progressed. While students wrote, I modeled writing by also writing in my personal journal. I considered this essential to their adoption to this practice.

After journaling, the district spelling program was addressed. Each Tuesday, a pretest list of 20 words was given to the students who then corrected their mistakes. Misspelled words were studied using an eight-step process that involved writing the word, saying it to yourself, covering it up and rewriting it, checking it for accuracy, spelling it to yourself silently a second time, spelling it aloud, writing it again, and finally, pronouncing the word correctly. On Wednesdays, Thursdays, and Fridays spelling was studied in a variety of ways. This included using the words in sentences, choral readings of the weekly list, practicing with partners, completing a crossword prepared by a student using a commercial software program, dictating the list as students keyboarded the words and then self-corrected the spelling, or silent, independent study. Each Monday, the final test over a list was given; after this was corrected, students recorded their scores on a spelling performance chart. Depending on ability, and in conjunction with the students' resource teacher, many of

Project Victory's L.D. resource students were on modified or shortened lists.

After spelling, students spent time on content work. This was usually done in small groups with groupings formed according to need. At this time, I had students apply their study skill knowledge; this was also was an excellent opportunity for some cooperative learning and peer tutoring to occur. In small groups, students completed assignments cooperatively, quizzed one another over subject matter, or studied concepts and then discussed them. Content work was also addressed in the large-group setting, usually through discussion, vocabulary work, or using computers for application of both concepts and vocabulary. A good example of this type of instruction would be a lesson involving outlining. Instead of using the basal lesson on outlining, I taught it by using science and social studies texts. Instruction in both topical outlining and chronological outlining was provided in this way. It made more sense to use the actual material that students would be responsible for in learning this skill. By using the content area material in such a manner, content vocabulary was also being reinforced.

SSR followed content work. Students read materials of their choosing and recorded their selections on cards that I collected throughout the year. Students secured reading materials from a variety of sources--the school media center, the public library, from home, or they got their materials from me. Newspapers and a publication entitled STAR were favorites. Response to their reading

(I avoided the term book reports) was voluntary but highly encouraged. It could be done utilizing a variety of commercially prepared reviews, by summarizing what was read, as a journal topic, through discussion, or perhaps through graphic representation such as illustrations, collages, or drawings. These reviews were then displayed throughout the classroom. Reviews turned in enabled students to earn points which were entered into the grade book and figured into final grades.

Weekly activities were merely extensions of daily work and were set up on a schedule comparable to the daily schedule. I made every attempt to adhere to the schedule but remained flexible as well. (See Appendix F.)

Another weekly activity designed to extend daily work was a regular language experience activity conducted every Friday. Each Friday I had the assistance of a parent volunteer whose child was not a member of Project Victory. I conducted the language experience in the following manner. I used visual stimulation in the form of photographs that were selected from professional photography magazines based on their visual ambiguity and interesting perspective. I would sequence the photos and present them to students individually. This allowed students the opportunity to work one-on-one with either the parent volunteer or myself. Students were asked to either describe the photo or to explain what they thought was happening in the photo. Their responses were then scripted verbatim by the parent volunteer or myself. These handwritten responses were then typed without capitalization, punctuation, correct spelling, or grammar. The

following Monday, the typed responses were returned to students who in turn edited their work and then chose a particular entry to develop into a weekly assigned writing essay. The photos were then displayed for all to review. This form of the language experience approach enabled me to provide shared experiences, discussion experiences, and opportunities for students to tell stories from their own backgrounds. This helped to legitimize students' oral expression and personal vocabularies and experiences. The LEA helps develop word recognition and basic sight vocabulary as well as to expand students' existing vocabularies because the text is student-generated. This provided a basis for work with mechanics and spelling. Finally, it gave me a chance to give each student individual attention and provided students with the opportunity to draw inferences, to write their own ideas, and to present them in a form for others to read. By incorporating the LEA in that manner I directly taught process writing. Students were prewriting, drafting, responding, revising, and editing. Stories were displayed around the classroom, compiled into booklets, or read aloud. Thus, students experienced the publishing stage of writing as well. Most beneficial to me was the fact that composing also provided reading practice. At the same time, students were engaging in another required skill--inferring from pictures.

To teach two of the skills required by the basal, following directions and adjusting reading speed, I used resources brought into the classroom in lieu of activities suggested by the basal. As a means of teaching the following directions skill, I presented my

students with numerous job applications and forms. This provided a functional and practical learning experience for the students. Adjusting reading speed involves the skills of skimming and scanning, two rapid types of reading. I chose to teach this by utilizing restaurant menus. Students were asked to locate specific items (scanning) and then to glance through menus in order to get a general idea (skimming) as to type of establishment, type of cuisine, and price range. With both these activities, students were also exposed to some specific vocabulary inherent in both menus and applications. Words such as entre, beverage, gratuity, spouse, and previous were all introduced while these lessons were being taught. This type of instruction was relevant and useful.

Another weekly activity included integration time with a classroom of 13 students who had mental disabilities. This integration consisted of language activities which revolved around a series of functional vocabulary units. The vocabulary was selected from Brigance Functional Vocabulary and from Wilson's Essential Word Lists. After introducing the words, students practiced using them in a variety of ways such as M.D. students dictating them to my students, collaboratively writing stories, playing word games using the vocabulary, and simple identification exercises.

Each Thursday, the combined classes worked together in the school's computer lab for a 2-hour block. The first part of the block was generally teacher-directed; during the remaining time students could work on their own assignments or self-selected software.

Working with these students and the four adults that accompanied them was both rewarding and reciprocal. By helping the students with mental disabilities with their language skills, my students were simultaneously reinforcing their own language skills. They felt useful, knowledgable, and needed within an educational setting, perhaps for the first time in a long time.

At the inception of the program, the grade-level administrator assigned to the seventh grade spent some time each Wednesday after school talking to the Project Victory students about their progress, completion of assignments, behavior, and attitude. Because the need existed, this evolved into structured weekly sessions that gradually expanded to include the whole team and finally, the entire seventh grade. The guidance counselor assigned to the seventh grade assisted at these Wednesday afternoon study sessions. Once again, I felt fortunate with such an obvious display of support for my program.

These weekly and daily activities were maintained throughout the course of the year in addition to several other special activities designed to enhance language instruction. In late September, the entire class walked to the public library where each student secured a library card and participated in a tour of the facility and its resources. Two graduate students from the University of Northern Iowa came and worked with the class once weekly. Each participated for an 8-week segment, focusing on oral expression and creative dramatics. In February, Project Victory students traveled to another intermediate school in the district to view a special theatrical presentation

called "1001 Black Inventions" in observance of Black History Month. Also, several guest speakers from the community augmented the functional vocabulary units of study. I also maintained a schedule of books that I had selected to be read aloud to students each month.

As I was the team leader for my particular team of teachers, I made use of the 4 team leader days allowed by the district each year. Twice during the year, once on October 9 and again on March 4, I visited the homes of my students in an effort to increase home-school communication and to sensitive myself to the home environments of my students.

Assessment Measures

Formal assessments and informal measures were used to evaluate the success of Project Victory. Students were pretested with the ITBS during the 3rd week of September 1987, approximately 1 week after becoming a part of the study. They were posttested with the same instrument in mid-May of 1988. Students were given the full battery in the September testing but were only administered the language subtests in May. Those subtests included vocabulary, reading, spelling, capitalization, punctuation, and usage.

The cumulative or end-of-the-book tests that accompany the basal series were given at the end of May as were the basal series diagnostic placement tests. These results were also considered as a means of evaluating the program.

Three informal means of evaluation also were used to assess Project Victory. Four taped oral readings were conducted at intervals

throughout the year. These were done October 7, 1987, December 17, 1987, February 24, 1988 and May 6, 1988. One-hundred-word passages were used and these excerpts were taken from the following sources: the seventh-grade social studies text, the seventh-grade science text, the seventh-grade math text, and the seventh-grade basal series. Students were asked to read the passages aloud into a tape recorder. A miscue coding system was used in which the following miscues were recorded: substitutions, additions, omissions, and mispronunciations.

Another informal measure used was a holistic writing evaluation on selected journal entries of 4 students who participated in Project Victory. Sixty-two entries were assigned to students throughout the year. Of these 62, 5 entries were evaluated at regular intervals throughout the year. A 6-point analytical scale was used for holistic scoring of writing samples and Appendix G lists the scale used to evaluate writing samples.

Additionally, the technique of naturalistic assessment was employed. The author wrote daily comments in a learning log about student progress, behavior, and attitude. Anecdotal records pertaining specifically to reading and writing were placed into students' cumulative reading folders and sent to next year's teacher.

CHAPTER IV

FINDINGS AND IMPLICATIONS

The purpose of this chapter is to summarize the previous three chapters of this study. Also, this chapter will present evaluation findings and suggest future implications of research studies on implementing whole language for high-risk students.

Research indicates that curriculum and instruction based on the theory of whole language naturally and contextually extends oral language development, recognizes and validates dialectical differences, and fosters literacy and encourages reading as a lifelong leisure activity. (Clarke, 1987; Goodman, 1979; Goodman & Goodman, 1981; Newman, 1985; Rich, 1985). Researchers and educators tend to theoretically agree with implementing the philosophy of whole language into practice. However, the area of appropriate evaluation of programs consistent with whole language theory remains unclear.

The purpose of this study was to identify components of programs based on whole language theory and to describe one such program designed especially for high-risk students. The study also attempted to determine the appropriateness of such programs for high-risk students and to identify assessment measures for programs consistent with the theory of whole language.

Twenty students, identified by the school district as high-risk, were the subjects included in this descriptive study. Subjects received a 3-hour morning block of language instruction. The curriculum and instructional procedures chosen for these students

stressed the relevancy, functionalism, and interactive aspect of language. A learning environment that included a wide variety of printed material and encouraged risk taking and the use of all language modes was created.

Funding for this program was provided by a special status grant that was awarded to this researcher by the school district. The program allowed a holistic approach to the teaching of language, including reading. Certain conditions were placed on the operation of the program: using the ITBS instrument as a pretest and posttest measure, administering the cumulative basal test, and using the district's spelling curriculum.

Findings

Both formal and informal evaluation procedures were used to assess the worth of the instructional program described in this study. The formal assessment was conducted through the ITBS language subtest. Results of the cumulative test as well as the diagnostic test provided by the basal reader program were also analyzed. Informal assessments included an analysis of students' miscues and a holistic writing analysis of writing samples taken from students' journals. Additional assessment information was obtained from a daily log of observations kept by this researcher.

Formal Assessments

The ITBS was administered as a pretest and posttest to the subjects who participated in Project Victory. Table 2 presents the pretest and posttest means and standard deviations for the high-risk,

seventh-grade students who were selected for participation in this study. The type of score used was the Normal Curve Equivalency (NCE) score. A significant *t* value between the pretest and posttest results, (t = 5.013; df = 38; and p <.001), indicates that the students' posttest scores differed significantly following involvement in the Project Victory intervention. The results suggest that curriculum and instruction based on the theory of whole language is effective in increasing the total language performance scores (i.e., vocabulary, reading, spelling, capitalization, punctuation, and usage) of a select group of high-risk, seventh-grade students.

Table 2

ITBS Mean Total Language Normal Curve Equivalency Scores for Fall 1987 and Spring 1988 Testing

Measure	September 1987	May 1988	Difference
M	34.15	36.70	*2.55
SD	17.63	14.75	

*t = 5.013

p < .001

Additionally, fall 1988 total language scores were compared to the fall 1987 scores. On the fall 1988 tests, students gained a mean NCE score of 36.95 (S.D. = 20.43). This score represents a gain of 2.80 NCE units beyond the fall 1987 testing. Also, the students demonstrated no decline in scores between the spring 1988 and fall 1988 testings. Typically, when students are removed from instruction over the summer months, performance scores generally tend to decline. However, the spring 1988 score of 36.70 and the fall 1988 score of 36.95 indicates an actual increase of .25.

Based on a simple analysis of National Grade Equivalency scores, subjects participating in Project Victory had realized an average of .85 of a month's growth per year in previous years of schooling. Analysis of subjects' 1987-1988 performance demonstrated an average of 2.6 months' growth per month of instruction. The growth beyond what would be expected may be attributed to students' involvement in Project Victory.

Students were also given the diagnostic placement test that accompanies the basal program. On this assessment, subjects had scores that placed them in either the sixth-, seventh-, or eighth-grade level. Results indicated that 7 students had scores which placed them in the seventh-grade basal, and the remaining 13 students had scores that suggested placement in the eighth-grade basal. On the basis of this procedure, all students demonstrated ability to be placed in a basal 1 or 2 years beyond the basal used in the project.

Informal Measures

Informal measures also indicated student progress. Based on miscue analysis of the four taped oral readings conducted throughout the school year, group percentages indicated a decrease in miscues. Table 3 presents the miscue analysis score from four separate testings throughout the year for each student in the study. This table indicates that the students increased oral reading accuracy from 93.6% to 96.1%.

Table 3

Miscue Percentages from Four Separate Testings Throughout the Year

	Test 1	Test 2	Test 3	Test 4
Subject 1	96	98	97	96
Subject 2	97	95	97	96
Subject 3	97	100	98	99
Subject 4	98	97	97	100
Subject 5	90	97	96	96
Subject 6	96	98	96	96
Subject 7	86	95	95	93
Subject 8	91	96	97	96
Subject 9	94	88	80	92
Subject 10	91	98	97	96
Subject 11	97	99	96	97
Subject 12	89	95	94	96

Table 3, cont.

	Test 1	Test 2	Test 3	Test 4
Subject 13	95	98	98	97
Subject 14	90	97	92	96
Subject 15	98	95	98	95
Subject 16	97	97	99	99
Subject 17	91	95	96	95
Subject 18	97	95	98	96
Subject 19	95	98	92	97
Subject 20	87	97	94	95
Average	93.6	96.4	95.3	96.1

Another source of information for this assessment included a holistic writing evaluation. Appendix G presents the scale used in this analysis. The basic writing scale indicates overall writing growth as well as diagnosing strengths and weaknesses. The holistic method of evaluation allows evaluation of students' writing in natural situations. It judges the entire piece of writing quickly, impressionistically, and systematically and determines how successfully the writer can communicate. For this analysis, writing samples were selected from the journals maintained by the students throughout the year. To avoid bias of topic, the students' journals were searched to locate writing samples addressing the same topic.

This search resulted in the identification of five samples apiece written by 4 different students at intervals throughout the year. Two independent readers carried out the holistic evaluation of these 20 writing samples to determine improvement in writing practices over the course of the year. The two readers reached exact agreement on 12 of the 20 writing samples and did not vary more than 1 scale point on the remaining eight samples. The scores from this analysis, presented in Table 4, reveal an increase in writing performance during the course of the school year.

Table 4

Independent Readers' Average of Scores from Analysis of Student Writing Samples

Subject	Fall Sample 1	Spring Sample 5
Subject 9	1.5	3
Subject 12	2	3.5
Subject 13	3	3.5
Subject 19	3.5	4.5

It was the author's observation that evaluation of Project Victory programs by means of naturalistic assessment produced the most practical information in terms of evaluating student growth, progress,

and learning. Naturalistic assessment provided this researcher with both formative and summative evaluation. Observations were recorded daily in a learning log; thoughts, impressions, and sometimes even events were recorded. Examination of the log yielded a list of emerging needs, suggestions, and reminders. By recording my thoughts and ideas, I could keep track of individuals' needs and plan instruction accordingly. Review of the log also provided an overall view of student progress.

For example, some students needed to improve their organizational skills. By observing this and recording progress in a log, the author could provide prompts and cueing and focus on certain behaviors (i.e., forgetting necessary materials, not turning in assignments, tardiness). By logging this information, the author could, at a glance, provide feedback on the improvement of behaviors to the student, parent(s), other teachers, and administrators.

A behavior checklist was used to initially isolate unproductive behaviors in early October. While team teaching with the special education teachers, the researcher could record observations on the sheet. Recorded observations were discussed with students, at home visits, and conferences. The checklist included the following behaviors: (a) listening behavior, (b) discussion behavior, (c) starting task behavior, (d) attention-to-task behavior, (e) problem-solving behavior, (f) ending task behavior, (g) type of assignment, (h) length of assignment, (i) reinforcement needs, (j) general manner with peers, and (k) interaction with teacher.

The daily log helped to evaluate students' improvement of these behaviors. The log also provided indications of yearly improvements. In late April, the checklist was again used. While observing students during a lesson being taught by one of the special education teachers, the researcher was able to record observations on behavior. Disruptive behaviors that students exhibited at the beginning of the year decreased. The first trimester 28 discipline referrals were written; the second trimester 21 were written; only 7 were written the third and final trimester of the year.

Another area evaluated by naturalistic assessment was the area of study skills. Again, the daily log helped this researcher become aware of such occurrences as: who came to class prepared, who completed assignments, and who was habitually tardy and absent.

Based on teacher observation, the length of time spent writing increased and the quality of writing samples improved. Initially, many Project Victory students were hesitant about writing and sharing their writings. As the year progressed, students became more willing to write, to carry out the process of revising and editing, and to write for longer periods of time. Students also began to address more personal, private topics through their writing. Appendix H presents five writing samples for 1 of the students in this analysis. Increasingly, students became more willing to select writing as a voluntary activity and to share their writing.

In reference to subjects' journals and LEAs, naturalistic assessment provided this researcher with a means of evaluation

consistent with the philosophy of whole language. By reading and responding to journal entries, improvements were noted. Goodman (1979) stated that teachers tend to tolerate mistakes in oral expression but tend to be put off with mistakes in written expression. Perhaps this is due to the complexity and time-consuming nature of the task. Writing is a demanding task, but holistic scoring and observation enabled the author to keep a running tab of students, a record to which students and teachers had access. Journals kept in the room, along with LEA writings kept in folders, allowed for accessible evaluation. Review of entries and samples indicated both progress and difficulties. Although responding to journal entries was time-consuming, students looked forward to written remarks. Responding became a reciprocal process. Keeping samples in folders aided in monitoring students' written expression.

Observations and records helped this researcher to evaluate LEA writing continuously, impressionistically, and quickly. By jotting down impressions, the author was able to provide constant feedback and to isolate common errors. These observations were used to form whole-group writing instruction focusing on areas needing improvement. At the year's end, students selected two favorite samples from their own writing, either journal topics or LEA exercises, to be included in their reading folder which was passed to the next year's teacher.

It was also noticed that non-Standard English usage was one area of performance that stood out. Students oral and written expression

reflected their non-Standard English usage. Usually, I repeated non-Standard phraseology, rephrasing statements as questions in Standard English. I avoided correcting the non-Standard usage. Often, as a warm-up activity or anticipatory set, phrases commonly used by the students were written on the board. Students were asked to rewrite phrases into Standard English. Standard vs. non-Standard applications were then discussed. Through observation, the researcher noted an improvement in usage and logged common non-Standard phrases. Phrases such as, I axed her (I asked her), What's the matter which you? (What's the matter with you?), Where Willie? (Where is Willie?), She look good (She looks good), She be going (She is going), We seen them guys (We saw those guys), and I'm fittin' to (I am fixing to or going to) were noted and used during instruction. Non-Standard usage was dealt with positively, in context, and in a nonthreatening manner as a result of observing oral expression.

Naturalistic observation also helped this researcher notice actual application of reading skill in the content areas and to base further instruction on these observations. One observation noted was that students outlined content material and thereafter studied or referred to their outlines rather than the text. It was also observed that students took notes and quizzed each other; many compared notes. Some students also selected their social studies text or science book for recreational or free reading time in order to complete assigned readings.

This researcher also observed a change in subjects' attitudes and noticed that students appeared more inclined to work cooperatively as the year progressed. This cooperation was the most apparent during exchanges with the students with mental disabilities. The author believes that the reciprocal activities caused the students to feel useful. It was also observed that Project Victory students appeared more confident during these exchanges and more willing to help. It also appeared that their sense of self-worth increased because they felt they were helping someone. These observations were confirmed by the two special education teachers.

Another observation noted was emerging patterns of free reading material choices. Newspapers received a cool reception initially, but increased in popularity as the year progressed. Hesitant at first, students began to locate and read stories that they first viewed on television and they discussed them with enthusiasm. STAR magazine also was a favorite free reading selection. The timely content of the magazine attracted students; because they were interested in the subject matter, they read them avidly. An additional indication of interest is that students asked permission to photocopy STAR's selections to compile into personal collections. Students recorded books on cards which were kept in reading folders in the room. Students selected periodical literature over books. Books were often misplaced, overdue, or lost.

Based on observation, students also appeared calmer, more trusting, and more willing to take risks in the classroom as the year

progressed. As the researcher continued to dignify responses, both oral and written, and encourage involvement and tolerate mistakes, it was observed that students learned positively from their mistakes. This information was shared with students, other team members, and the grade-level administrator.

An additional observation noted by this researcher was an increase in parental involvement. At the first parent-teacher conferences held in November 1987, only one parent of students participating in Project Victory attended conferences. At spring conferences the following March this same parent was in attendance, as well as four additional parents, increasing involvement by parents by 20%. This increase in participation may be attributed to home visits made by the researcher.

Finally, only 1 student on the 7B academic team was recommended for retention at the end of the 1987-1988 year, as compared to the approximate 10 retained in each of the previous 4 years. This student, who was a member of Project Victory, attended summer school the summer of 1988 and was successfully passed to the eighth grade.

Discussion

The sample of subjects included in this study is representative of high-risk students in the school district, based on their ITBS performance scores. Another indication of this high-risk nature includes the mobility rate that occurred within the group throughout the 1987-88 school year: 3 students left the program early and 1 entered late; the total percentage of students who were eligible for

and received special services (40%); and the percentage of the subjects who had been retained prior to their placement in seventh grade (50%).

According to Goodman and Goodman (1981), basing a program on the theory of whole language provides more effective instruction for high-risk students than does instruction offered by a traditional basal program. The curriculum and instruction implemented through Project Victory paid direct attention to the needs of high-risk students. Elements that contributed to the success of Project Victory included basing language instruction on students' needs, providing a wide range and variety of classroom resources, allowing a 3-hour instructional block, dignifying oral expression in varieties of non-Standard English, and making personal, home contacts.

Little research exists on the evaluation of programs congruent with whole language theory. However, even though formal measures including standardized and criterion tests are generally perceived as inappropriate and inadequate in terms of evaluating whole language, formal measures are the norm for monitoring student learning and assessing pupil progress in American schools.

It was this researcher's observation that evaluation by means of naturalistic assessment yielded the most practical information in terms of evaluating student growth, progress, and learning for those who were involved in the Project Victory program. Informal measures, particularly naturalistic assessment, provided this researcher with formative and summative evaluation. Recording daily observations

allowed for individual student assessment focusing on strengths and limitations and it allowed for instruction to be individualized to the specific language needs of the students and tailored to the whole group as well.

In retrospect, this researcher perceived Project Victory as a success. It provided relevant language instruction directed by the strengths, needs, and abilities of a group of high-risk, seventh-grade students. Certain activities, such as journaling and utilizing the LEA were beneficial; however, they were also time-consuming and demanding. Exercising professional judgment was allowed in terms of selecting instruction and materials. Since the author was the only person in the building attempting to implement such a program, support outside of the author's academic team and grade-level administrator was minimal.

Several limitations are included in this study. This particular study does not include a control group and assignment of subjects was not conducted randomly. An overrepresentation of male students, especially minority males, as well as the size of the total group reduces the ability to generalize the results of this study to the overall school population. However, minority males typically comprise a large percentage of students identified as high-risk (Cummins, 1986; Nation at Risk, 1983).

Implications

Based on the positive results of this study, further research on curriculum and instruction for high-risk students based on the theory

of whole language is needed. Goodman (1987) advocated practice and evaluation based on whole language because this type of curriculum and instruction focuses on learner strengths and needs. He specifically addressed the issue of meeting their language needs outside of traditional educational philosophy and policies and traditional curriculum and instructional practices. Recently, Sagor (1988) focused attention on the high-risk populations' unique educational needs. This study was one attempt to identify an effective educational program for high-risk students.

More appropriate assessment instruments and procedures need to be implemented if programs consistent with whole language theory are to be adequately evaluated. Informal measures such as naturalistic observation, anecdotal records, holistic writing evaluation, and miscue analysis are being employed in some situations (Culyer, 1984; Marek et al., 1984; Mayher & Brause, 1986; Moore, 1983; Wangberg & Reutten, 1986), they are not recognized by the majority of educators, administrators, school systems, and parents as legitimate evaluation techniques. Formal measures are the norm for monitoring student learning and assessing pupil progress in American schools. This researcher felt that the most informative means of evaluation was the use of naturalistic assessment. Naturalistic assessment relies on the teacher's knowledge of the students' abilities, backgrounds, interests, and teacher intuition when making classroom choices. Moore (1983) reported that many teachers do rely on their intuition about students' abilities, rather than relying solely on test scores. He

also stated that recent developments in educational evaluation may lead in the direction of improved procedures for observing and documenting student progress. Programs such as Project Victory that demonstrate effective instruction for high-risk students contribute to increasing the acceptance of informal evaluation.

It would be a challenge to empirically research the effects of implementing the theory of whole language on longitudinal development. This study demonstrated that a program based on the theory of whole language should be seriously considered when selecting curriculum and instruction for high-risk learners.

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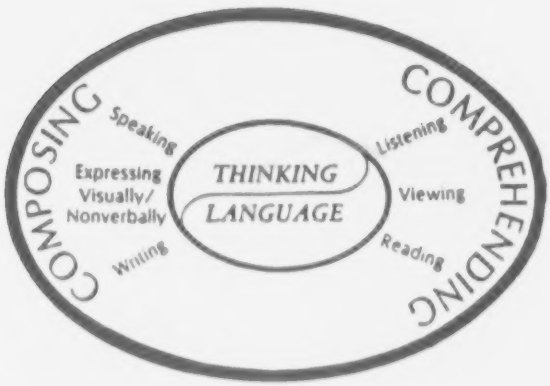
APPENDICES

APPENDIX A

Iowa Department of Public Instruction Model for Language Arts



APPENDIX B

Additional Classroom Resources

Catalogs--(teacher)

Current Topics File--(teacher)

Graphic Aids Box--(teacher)

Literature Reviews--(Commercially prepared & teacher)

Newspapers--12 daily newspapers (1 grant, 1 teacher, 10 corporate sponsor)

Miscellaneous Newspapers (teacher)

Periodicals--Ebony, Jet, National Geographic, People, Life, STARS (grant)

Miscellaneous Periodicals--(community sponsor, teacher)

Reference Books--(grant)

Trade Books (grant, teacher)

Learning Stations--Typewriter station, listening station, materials box, library corner, conference table, newspaper station (teacher)

APPENDIX C

Project Victory Objectives

1. The learner will prioritize time.
2. The learner will increase existing vocabulary.
3. The learner will extend functional vocabulary.
4. The learner will become familiar with and use media resources.
5. The learner will be responsible for assigned work.
6. The learner will improve spelling ability.
7. The learner will demonstrate ability to use graphic aids.
8. The learner will improve Standard English usage.
9. The learner will improve ability to use context clues.
10. The learner will increase ability to locate topics, especially in content area material.
11. The learner will improve note taking and outlining ability.
12. The learner will increase time spent reading.
13. The learner will increase time spent writing.
14. The learner will improve listening ability.
15. The learner will enhance self concept.
16. The learner will improve conduct and appropriate social behaviors.
17. The learner will improve self-monitoring of comprehension.
18. The learner will increase ability to take risks in the classroom.
19. The learner will improve ability to respond appropriately to authority.
20. The learner will improve attitude toward schooling process.

APPENDIX D

Reading Skill Sequence

Harcourt Brace Jovanovich. Golden Voyages, Level 12, Eagle Edition

Study Habits	Qualifying Ideas in Sentences
Adjusting Reading Speed	Cause and Effect Relationships
The Library	Drawing Conclusions
Taking Notes	Predicting Outcomes
Following Directions	Fact and Opinion
Topic and Main Idea	Slanted Writing
Important and Unimportant Details	Inferring from Pictures
Topical Organization and Outlining	Newspapers

Modified Skill Sequence

Study Habits	Slanted Writing
The Library	Inferring from Pictures
Following Directions	Qualifying Ideas in Sentences
Reading Newspapers	Cause and Effect Relationships
Taking Notes	Topic and Main Idea
Topical Organization and Outlining	Important and Unimportant Details
Adjusting Reading Speed	Drawing Conclusions
Fact and Opinion	Predicting Outcomes

APPENDIX E

Daily Schedule of Activities

Daily assignment update/school event update

Record keeping and time management

Self-selected readings

Sharing time

Current events with newspapers

Reading aloud

Spelling (district program)

Content area work

Vocabulary (functional)

SSR time

APPENDIX F

Weekly Activities

Writing assignment

Spelling pretest/posttest

2 hour computer block

Media Center visit for self-selection

LEA activity

Assignment update/ progress check with grade level administrator

Integration activities with mental disabilities classroom

APPENDIX G

Holistic Writing Scale

6 Clear ideas, organized with support, command of Standard English usage, may have mechanical errors

5 Organized, ideas presented adequately with some support, usage mistakes, and occasional mechanical errors.

4 Shows some organization, support is evident, errors don't obstruct purpose.

3 Some development, disorganized, hard to follow, little support, problems with Standard English, and errors

2 Little, if any structure or development, no support, thoughts unclear, usage errors affect understanding, numerous mechanical errors also interfere with understanding.

1 No purpose, no structure, no support, cannot express self in written mode. Usage, mechanics greatly interfere with comprehension.

0 blank, can't decipher, refusal to write

APPENDIX H

Writing Samples

Writing Sample 1

Subject 9

Journal entry no. 1 Wednesday, September 16, 1987

Topic: What is your favorite activity?

1. play hard crucking foodball
2. I like thick crust Chessey pizza
3. I like going real fasto skateing
4. I like tough hard killing karte
5. swim and I am soce
6. play baseball with my step dad
7. playing game on the TV
8. and geting New shoe and close
9. I like ride my bike
10. I run for a hour

Writing Sample 2

Subject 9

Journal entry no. 20 Friday, November 6, 1987

Topic: What is the worst thing that ever happened to you?

I fell in hole in
the back of my out yard
we playing foot ball
was trying showoff I
broke my leg the girls
laugh at me and I
fell. and so the cried

Writing Sample 3

Subject 9

Journal entry no. 34 Monday, February 1, 1988

Topic: How do you feel about mentally disabled students?

I feel they should get the same right that we got and we have to try to spell there name that make me to feel bad i don't have a sister or brother but i go to school we i was 4-5 year old i was scared of kind like that because i through they was going to hurt me. but then i was more scared of me than of them so now i can't live in same house with them it won't hurt me at all now. Joe has disabled student in are class room but it is a experience for are class to work with them and there are working with us — work with them class 13 no. and love disabled people like a family and like three sister? brother. i feel about one self for a change so now that how i feel about disabled student

Writing Sample 4

Subject 9

Journal entry no. 47 Tuesday, March 8, 1988

Topic: Imaginary conversation number #1

"yo baby let's go to my house and have some Cookees and milk and listen to some soft tones, I" get the suntanlotion
And this girls name is "Ebon.,
berry she make me feel like A, King
Lord Ebony [illegible]
believe or not I like
her alot I wonder do she like
me" Ebon. what" if I ask how
much, do like me what..., Ebon.
say Little, much" so, so,

But any way you got a nice
smile" Ebon. thank you Robert
for comments your eyes
[illegible].

It was hard to get all this
out. but mans [illegible]
to do,

Writing Sample 5

Subject 9

Journal entry no. 63 Tuesday, May 3, 1988

Topic: How old do you think you'll live to be and what do you want to be?

I wont be a Singer on
Star Stroch the if I became
Pro Singer I'll will ~~will~~
leave my mic that I use
for people that like my
song get me 3 many
Shoes Car and Clothes
I will like be 198 be-
I die because I want
~~Do~~ To See Every thing
in the world

END

U.S. Dept. of Education

Office of Education
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Date Filmed

March 21,1991